

CHARLIE BAKER
Governor



KARYN POLITO
Lt. Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 24, 2017

CONTACT

William Pitman, Governor's Office

william.pitman@state.ma.us

Colleen Quinn, Executive Office of Education

colleen.quinn.eoe@state.ma.us



**Governor Baker Tours Lawrence Head Start Program, Meets With
Early Educators**

*Baker-Polito Administration recently provided largest increase to early-ed provider
rates in a decade*

LAWRENCE – Governor Charlie Baker, Education Secretary James Peyser, and Early Education and Care (EEC) Commissioner Thomas Weber today visited a Head Start program and childcare center at the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc.(GLCAC) to read to toddlers and meet with early education teachers. The Baker-Polito Administration [recently announced](#) a \$28 million early educator rate increase, the largest increase of its kind in at least 10 years, which includes \$9 million in additional support for infant and toddler providers.

Governor Baker met with early education teachers to discuss child care, workforce recruitment issues facing the program and the importance of exposing students to STEM curriculum at an early age as they do at GLCAC, where young children build miniature bridges and learn math skills. Greater Lawrence Community Action Council (GLCAC) is a social services agency, with a childcare program and Head Start centers in Lawrence, Methuen, Andover and North Andover. Head Start at GLCAC combines education with support services, including health, nutrition, disability services, and parent engagement.

The visit to the early education and childcare program was part of the Baker-Polito Administration's ongoing education series, as state officials highlight various

education programs, initiatives and funding opportunities from early education to college level, all aimed at providing a quality and affordable education for every student in the Commonwealth.

“As part of our commitment to early education, our administration is pleased to propose a 6% rate increase for our teachers and provide more opportunities to get low-income children into great programs like the GLCAC,” **Governor Baker said.** “We appreciate the opportunity to meet with early educators and some of our youngest students to learn more about their innovative curriculum, including STEM programs, to teach our children creativity from the outset of their education.”

“Retaining and recruiting quality staff is essential to any program, particularly ones involving young children,” **Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said.** “This historic investment in early educator provider rates will help ensure early education and care programs can better compensate their teachers.”

In April, the Administration announced a 6 percent rate increase for all early education and care programs that provide care for low-income families. As part of the proposal, the Administration also plans to reinvest approximately \$9.3 million to provide further rate hikes to some infant and toddler care providers to ensure they are paid the median federal reimbursement rate. The rate increases depend on legislative approval to move available funding from Fiscal Year 2017 to Fiscal Year 2018.

This significant investment in rate increases will support early educator salaries and benefits at early education and care programs in order to improve hiring and retention issues faced by programs that serve low-income families receiving state subsidies. The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) will also increase access to child care - serving approximately 1,100 more children during FY’ 18 - by reissuing vouchers from families that no longer need subsidized care during the year.

Along with the rate increases and reissuing vouchers, EEC plans to ensure income-eligible children receive access to at least 12 months of continuous care, regardless of changes in family status.

“In visiting the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council Head Start program, we were able to hear directly from early educators who will be impacted by this rate increase, as well as discuss other initiatives and policy reforms underway that will provide meaningful quality improvements to this part of our education system that serves our youngest students,” **Education Secretary James Peyser said.**

“Teachers are at the heart of a high-quality early education and care system,” **Early**

Education and Care Commissioner Tom Weber said. "We are thrilled to be able to provide a rate increase for our early education programs and teachers, and to recognize their important contribution to our Commonwealth."

"The students and teachers of GLCAC's early childhood education programs thank Governor Baker and Secretary Peyser for visiting and learning about the innovative and important work we do in preparing children to begin a life of learning. The increased support of the Commonwealth is critical for our programs to ensure we can hire and retain qualified and dedicated teachers by providing a living wage," **said Evelyn Friedman, Executive Director of the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc.**, a social services agency in Lawrence that serves 31,000 individuals annually.

In addition to the Head Start Child Care Center, GLCAC is part of the Lawrence Early Achievement Partnership, a state-administered program to open more pre-kindergarten slots for preschoolers heading to kindergarten.

Since taking office in 2015, the Baker-Polito Administration has proposed increasing spending on all K-12 schools by more than \$318 million dollars.

Massachusetts was recently ranked #1 in the country for education by U.S. News and World Report, and also tops the list for best performing states on Advanced Placement Exams.

###